

Puppy Love

04 Sounds Like A Plan

~Liam~

I remained with my back against the tree, thinking about how best to handle the matter with Sophia. Letting go wasn't going to be an option. How could I lead one day if I could not save the girl I wanted to spend the rest of my life with? Only I knew how I felt.

"What's up?" Miles asked me, taking off his shirt. I shook my head.

"I am not hunting; Alex isn't in the mood," I said, and he stopped what he was doing.

"There is nothing we can do about it, Li. Mike fucked up. You aren't King yet and won't be for a long time. I think you should just let her go," he said, and Marvin and Oliver approached.

"Yeah, I think you should let her go, Li. She is great and all that, but this is beyond us. You heard our grandma Stephanie; we can't get involved. Even our parents can't get involved. I doubt we would still be in Grizlo if they had told either of our fathers. They know how close we are to the Maguires because of your relationship with Sophia. There is no way they would have let us remain here. Your mom is cool. Mine would have yanked us out of here," Oliver said, and we laughed.

Aunty Linda was that protective. His words made me smile a bit.

"At least I managed to work your facial muscles into a smile," He teased, and the rest laughed.

"I do not plan to let her go," I confessed, and their demeanour changed.

"So what do you want to do?" Marvin asked on a serious note.

"Investigate and find out what really happened, then figure out how to get her and her mother out of the mess should Mike be guilty," I said, and Miles shook his head.

"Bad idea, Li. You are going to get all of us in trouble for that. That man did it. He ran away," He said, and I nodded.

"Yet he lied that I did not come by his house so I do not get caught up in the mess. Something is off. He might be innocent, or it might have been self-defence," I said, and Oliver disagreed.

"What threat were Luna Glenda and her daughter Lara to him that he had to do them in too? His fur was in the claw marks that killed them." Oliver said, and I nodded.

"I get that part, but what did Beta Mike stand to gain in all this?" I asked, and neither could answer.

"Maybe they had a deal, and money was involved. You know, people do crazy stuff for money," Marvin said, and I shook my head.

"I doubt that is the case. There is more to this; I am getting to the bottom of it. I can't let Sophia go like that. I can't and I won't. I refuse to give her up," I said, and Oliver rested his hand on my shoulder and shook me slightly.

"Are you nuts? You can't get caught up in that shit. You know what this may mean for our family. We might be royals, but we have limits, Li. Your father has limits," He said, and I shook my head, pushing his hands off my shoulder.

"You didn't hear her on the phone. She was scared," I said, and Miles nodded.

"She is with her mother. She will be fine," he said, and I shook my head.

"They were both afraid. We can't abandon them to their fate," I said, and Marvin growled.

"I know you like her and all, and you have a long-time crush on each other, but this is too much of a price to pay. You two aren't even fated. What do you stand to gain in all this? We just graduated, Li. We can't start risking our lives, delving our noses into matters that do not concern us." He said, and I sighed.

"I don't have a crush; I love her," I said, and they were silent.

"Why didn't you ask her out ?" Oliver asked.

"I wanted to wait and be sure a fated wouldn't come between us. But since I turned eighteen, I am yet to meet someone, I only held back because I wanted her to turn eighteen too, but I realised I couldn't wait yesterday and decided I was ready to take that leap of faith with her. Determined to damn the consequences and reject whoever comes along after," I said, and Marvin sighed.

Neither of them could speak. A gloom occupied the atmosphere. I knew my words had sunk in deep.

"So what do you want to do now?" Marvin finally asked, and I nodded.

"Alpha Max and Kyle will help," I said, and Marvin's eyes widened while Oliver and Miles were shocked.

"You want to go to the East? What will we tell our parents we are going to do there? And how can they help with what has happened in Grizlo?" Oliver asked, and I nodded.

"They are neutral parties. Uncle Leo is family; he will tell our parents, but Alpha Max and Kyle will help us. Think about it. Every time we go to Mountain for holidays, who are the people that cover up for us?" I asked, and they knew where I was headed.

"This is different, Li. It isn't youthful exuberance. It is a life-and-death situation. Did it ever occur to you that they could also get into trouble if they choose to help us?" Marvin asked, and I shook my head.

"I know they will help. They do not have obligations like the others, and the royal family will not be involved. I am sure if we reach out, they will help," I said, trying to convince all of us, including myself.

There was uncertainty in the air, but that was all I had. Every other person I knew was either a Volkov or a Stepanov or had a seat on the council. If I would successfully help Sophia, I needed influential people who had no business with the royal family or the council, and that was Alpha Max and Kyle. I also had a good relationship with them. I had a strong feeling that they won't turn me down. What happened in Grizlo wasn't a general problem, so I knew no one would lift a finger. I wouldn't forgive myself if I let something bad happen to Sophia.

After we had discussed my plans in the woods extensively, we decided to head back home.

We arrived home, and to my surprise, everyone was packing, including Grandpa and Grandma.

"What is going on here?" Marvin asked, but I did not need to guess; I already knew what had happened.

"Go and pack your things, son; we are returning to the estate," Grandpa Jake said to Marvin, and Oliver grumbled.

We all hated it in the estate. It was isolated from everyone, especially my parent's bungalow.

They might like the serene feel of privacy, but we hated it. We wanted to mingle and mix with people that weren't our relatives.

"But why all of a sudden?" Marvin asked.

"MiKe's crime is in the news, and your fathers heard. The King is angry that we did not inform him immediately, and the Lords feel the same," Grandpa Jake said, sounding a bit sad.

It was clear he wasn't letting on everything that had transpired. My Grandmother rubbed his back gently to calm down, which meant they had had a heated argument with our fathers, and it was all my fault.

"What does Mike's crimes have to do with us?" Oliver said, and Grandma sighed.

"Liam moved here because of Sophia. Everyone knows it, even Sylvester. If Mike could murder his alpha, Luna, and their daughter, what would stop him from hurting the future heir to the throne? They do not want any of you here so they can protect you. I do not know what is happening, but your parents do not want you near this mess," She said.

Oliver looked at me. I knew what the look was about. It was about our discussion in the woods, but I couldn't care less. I meant what I said about helping Sophia. Nothing my father could say or do would deter me from helping her. He has had his love story and happily ever after; his love for me would not hinder me from mine. I did not care about Mike, but Sophia was in this mess, and she needed help.

I did not say anything or give away any sign that I was planning something. Instead, I walked past my Grandmother to head up the stairs to my room.

Charlotte was at the head of the stairs and sad too. It will be hard saying goodbye to all their friends. I was so caught up in what was happening to me that I did not think of how the matter would affect my sister and cousins, especially the triplets. Most of their friends were from Grizlo. How will they manage?

"I am sorry, Charlotte," I linked her, and she shook her head. Instead, she drew me close and hugged me.

"It is not your fault, Li. We were bound to leave someday," She said and broke the hug. She wiped away her tears and smiled.

"Been eighteen for months now and no sign of Mister Right. We might just get lucky in Lucland. Hopely our fathers allow us to visit the city, and we do not stay couped up in that castle," She said, and I gave a half smile that made her giggle.

Gemma and Eleanor approached just then.

"Guess you will see Aleksander soon," I told Eleanor, and she was indifferent about seeing her twin brother. She did not have to come to Grizlo Academy, but she was too etched to Harper and Lilly to follow her twin brother to Lucland Academy. I could understand her sadness. The people from Grizlo were cool and simple. They did not live fake lifestyles like the people in Lucland. There weren't gold diggers trying to get with us, except for Maya Rivers, who was also from Lucland. Had the situation been different, I would have laughed. I knew Maya's parents had moved to Grizlo so she could go to the academy, and I knew any of us was their target.

"Do you need me to help you pack?" Charlotte asked, and I knew she just wanted to be busy.

"Yeah, sure," I said while Gemma and Eleanor descended the stairs.

"Do you need help?" I heard Harper in my head, and I looked at the foyers from the top of the stairs and saw her looking up. She was worried for me.

"Charlotte is helping already," I linked back, and she nodded.

We headed to my room, and Charlotte started helping me pack. I could tell a lot was going on in her mind with how she focused on the task she had given herself. Soon her phone began to ring, and she asked me to help her get it.

"I am not in the mood to talk to anyone now," she said, and I reached for her phone to answer.

It was an unsaved number, so whoever was calling wasn't on her contact list. I cautiously answered, and the voice that came through made me freeze.

"Charlotte, please may I speak to Liam? I do not have much time," I heard her gentle voice come through the phone. She was afraid as before.

"Sophie.." I said, and she was silent a bit, then she responded quickly.

"Li, I am sorry," she said, her voice breaking.

"You have nothing to apologise for. Where are you? Can you get away?" I asked, and Charlotte was instantly beside me, curiosity written on her face.

"No, we are on a private boat in the cargo section. I was able to take Charlotte's number from my phone before they threw it into the sea. I do not have anyone's number, Li, and your phone is switched off," She said, sounding afraid and crying.

"I am so scared, Li. There are weird people here, and I do not know where we are going. I do not think we are safe. I think we are being held. Not sure. They took my mother up the deck, and she left her phone. I have been trying to call, but there is no network here. The network just came back now. This is my mother's line; I am sure they will throw it away once they see it, Li," she said, and I wondered where they would be going that would require them to travel by boat and who these men were.

"Listen to me, Sophia. I need you to hide this phone as best as you can. When you get to your destination, I need you to find a way to communicate your location so I can come and get you," I said.

"No, Li, my family is in a big mess. These men are dangerous. I do not think it is wise. He did it, Li. He murdered them. He came home covered in blood. I do not know what to do, Li," she said, weeping. I could hear that she was afraid.

"I will think of something," I said, not knowing what I would do, but I needed to tell her something to ease her mind.

"Do not get in trouble for my sake, Li. I am just calling to say goodbye properly..." She said, and I shook my head.

"No, Sophia, do not say goodbye to me," I said.

"But I have to, Li; I do not think we will ever see each other again..." She said, and the line went dead.

I dialled the number, and it was out of coverage. I ran my fingers through my hair, frustrated and confused.

I just needed a minute. I needed a fucking minute. I needed everything to be still so I could think.

"What are we going to do, Li?" Charlotte asked me, looking worried.

"I can't let her rot away for her father's crimes," I said, and she nodded in agreement.

"Should we plead with our parents to look into the matter and see how they can intervene for their sake? I am sure your father can bend a bit on this. She is an innocent person, Li. They should bend on it. Let us talk to our folks about it and see what happens," She said. I did not want to tell her my intentions to go to the East for help, so I nodded. There was no harm in asking my parents for help before seeking assistance elsewhere. Deep down, I hoped my father would listen and help out. Sophia didn't sound like they would last.